



**State of Wisconsin**  
**Department of Public Instruction**  
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

**\*\*\*NEWS RELEASE\*\*\***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**GEAR UP Day is April 12**

*Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs  
helps economically disadvantaged students prepare for and enroll in college*

MADISON—A program that is helping 3,000 economically disadvantaged students prepare for and succeed in college will hold a statewide video gathering to celebrate GEAR UP Day April 12.

The event, hosted at the Pyle Center on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus beginning at 10 a.m., also will be broadcast at the Milwaukee Area Technical College, and University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. The GEAR UP Day program will include student performances and testimonials, a motivational talk by Shaphan “Shay” Coleman of the Pathfinders program in Kenosha, and a college alumni panel.

Through a federal grant, the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) serves middle and high school students in the school districts of Ashland, Bayfield, D.C. Everest, Eau Claire, Green Bay, Madison, Milwaukee, Racine, South Shore, Washburn, and Wausau. The Bray Community Center in Racine, the United Community Center in Milwaukee, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee serve as partners in helping youth succeed.

“This program gives youth hope for a brighter future by instilling the belief that college is a possibility,” said State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster. “By helping middle school students prepare to take a rigorous high school curriculum and encouraging high school students to prepare for and enroll in postsecondary programs, GEAR UP helps to lift children out of poverty and supports our state and nation’s economic progress.”

GEAR UP works with students starting in sixth-grade and continues services through high school, serving the cohort with a focus on raising expectations for all students. The program provides

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comprehensive academic and student support services, including after-school tutoring and mentoring activities, which smooth student transitions from elementary to middle school, between grades, and through high school graduation. GEAR UP encourages students to study rigorous academic coursework based on college entrance requirements. Additionally, students and their parents learn about college options and financial aid earlier in the educational process.

“Continued federal financial support for GEAR Up is critical given that high academic-achievers from economically disadvantaged families are much less likely to enroll in college than their peers,” Burmaster said. “The program’s early college awareness activities, academic support, and information about scholarships and college financial aid help students choose career paths that challenge and interest them, opening the door to opportunities that might otherwise be closed. Additionally, GEAR UP’s work to raise student academic achievement supports our New Wisconsin Promise to close the achievement gap and ensure a quality education for every child.”

Wisconsin’s was one of 24 states awarded GEAR UP state grants in 2005. The \$3.5 million allocation for the Department of Public Instruction, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee was approved for six years, pending authorization of federal funds. The president’s education budget proposal for the next fiscal year, starting in October, eliminates funding for GEAR UP.

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